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ABSTRACT

The implications of the funding crisis in American postsecondary education for critical teaching are considered, and potential transformations in the role of professional sociologists and the legitimate uses of social science knowledge are addressed. The structural basis for the uneven distribution of funding for the social, physical, and natural sciences at the postsecondary level is explored at both the 50-state and federal levels. A critical teacher may find it necessary to advocate replacement of current linkages between state and corporate sector with linkages serving broader, community interests. It is claimed that states that successfully market themselves as sites for capital investment will likely have growth of the academic science infrastructure but also exploitation of workers. Suggestions are given for critical teaching and practice (documenting working conditions, providing instructional programs for workers, and gathering support from a coalition of science educators for emerging popular movements such as disarmament) and for the critical teacher (to promote a science in the service of people rather than profit). For the 50 states, relationships are shown between high and low: unionization, job growth, postsecondary growth, and federal research and development funds. (SW)

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SOS: CRITICAL TEACHING AND THE FISCAL CRISIS OF THE STATE

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Abstract

SOS: CRITICAL TEACHING AND THE FISCAL CRISIS OF THE STATE

The present funding crisis in American post-secondary education presents opportunities for critical teaching which could result in major transformations in both the role of professional sociologists and the legitimate uses of social science knowledge. The structural basis for the uneven distribution of post-secondary science funding is explored at both the 50-state and federal levels. A typology of this uneven distribution of funds provides four paths that critical teachers might follow pursuing these transformations.

SOS: CRITICAL TEACHING AND THE FISCAL CRISIS OF THE STATE[1]

A spectre is haunting the higher learning in North America. In faculty clubs and commons rooms, university professors shutter over the latest tale of financial doom and gloom to destroy this department and that programme, to delay this project and that library, to delete this job line and that required course. Ever tighter budgets find expression in attacks on the institution of academic tenure as well reductions in the necessities of professional practice: adequate support staff, xerox budgets, long-distance phones, travel monies and the like. Every issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education seems to detail the horror of still more financial cut-backs and staff retrenchments at yet other colleges and universities.

How are we to deal with these troubles? How are we to continue professing social science as financial exigencies seem to reshape our workplaces, our careers, and our roles? How are we to save our scholarly souls, our self esteem, our sense of social contribution as the spectre of the current world-wide economic crisis visits campus after campus in North America.

Even the most casual reading of the literature[2] makes clear that academics are being urged to act as narrowly self interested economic actors and to save what they can of their scholarly programmes and careers. In essence, professors are seen as resource dependent intellectuals who should negotiate the effects of cutbacks and retrenchments with their academic managers--deans and vice-presidents, leaving to those managers and their principles the definition of the present financial troubles. In brief, educational management defines the terms of the budget woes and the

professoriate acts upon that definition of the situation within its own narrowly conceived programme.

But there is an alternative to this wide-spread, well-articulated view that we administer our own reshaping to meet managerial definitions of the higher learnings's role in the current world-wide economic crisis. It is, of course, simply that we seek our scholarly salvation not with the educational managers who urge our narrowest self-interests upon us, but with the much broader collective interests of other professors on our campuses, all our students, their families and our communities. The nub of this alternative is to begin using our teaching and research opportunities to identify and clarify our broadest collective interests. In so doing, we can re-define the character of our fiscal troubles and the way these troubles can be expressed in the academy and the nation at large. Accordingly, the main hope of this paper is to make clear that an alternative to the conventional literature is thinkable, even necessary. And while we, of course, urge a specific re-definition and course of action, our main hopes will be realized if the plausibility of our (or any other) alternatives is made clearer.

RETHINKING OUR FINANCIAL SITUATION AS POLITICALIZATION

The first objection to redefining our managers' sense of our financial woes is that doing so would involve a politicalization of higher education. This objection is correct, as far as it goes. The alternative we are exploring requires professors to see themselves as political actors. What is forgotten in such objections is that professors in the U.S. have been political actors since the rise of graduate education as we understand it. And, what is further neglected is that American professors currently act out deeply politicized role definitions in their daily work routines.

Politics cannot be avoided since, as David Noble has shown, ph[illegible] and natural scientists in turn of the century American chose to serve the emerging corporate sector creating an academic based "science-for-profit" rather than a "science-for-the-people."[3] And we have shown elsewhere that academic social science leaders in the same period blunted the possibilities of a popularly focussed social science in exchange for the resources to institutionalize their disciplines in higher education. Indeed, sociologists were prominent in the actual negotiated exchanges that established the principles of academic tenure in return for our collective silence on the pressing economic issues of the day. Our Association's founders and our intellectual forerunners cast this extremely politicized deep structure of our present day work roles, and they did so with clear self-consciousness.[4]

If politics are unavoidable, what politics are preferable? One can, of course, continue our inherited narrowly defined, self-interested role definition. That is what the conventional literature urges upon us. Or one may choose to re-open our forerunners' tacit exchange, seeking a broader more widely shared interest in our communities. One can opt to become a 'critical teacher' who situates our learning in 'the fiscal crisis of the state.'

CRITICAL TEACHING AND THE FISCAL CRISIS OF THE STATE

To teach critically is to develop a theory and practice of classroom activity intended, in the words of young Marx, "to carry out a relentless critique of everything existing."[5] In the hands of a critical theorist like Marcuse, it is, as Douglas Kellner has noted, an attempt to "preserve

the concepts of reason, freedom, individuality, and human rights in the face of their suppression by fascism and relative neglect by the Social Democratic and Communist movements."[6]

To teach critically in the present situation is to identify a model of our troubles that offers a relentless alternative to that advanced by our managers and to use that model to guide our teaching and research. This means using the model as the substance of our introductory lectures, as the touchstone of our intermediate courses, and as the essence of our advanced seminars. Further, and most importantly, it means acting in our own lives as if the ideas we teach were the solid premises of principled behavior, not so much smoke in the air.

Perhaps the most useful model presently available to counter our managers' interpretation of our economic woes is James O'Connor's "fiscal crisis of the state."[7] Its utility is its linking of the state budget (from which higher education obtains most of its resources) with the corporate sector (with whose fortunes our forerunners cast our roles). O'Connor argues that the size and scope of state spending is both the cause and effect of the continuing expansion of the corporate sector. The state pays for infrastructure--from highways to education to welfare and warfare--supporting corporate profits. The state thus socializes corporate costs while corporate profits are privatized. But this creates a structural gap--or fiscal crisis--between state expenditures and state revenues. In essence, there is a tendency for state expenditures to rise more rapidly than the means to finance them. The corporate sector resists taxation of its share of the pie, even when the share is increasing due to increased state spending. And this resistance to taxes intensifies when

its share is decreasing. Finally, the fiscal crisis of the state is exacerbated by the many "special interests" that claim state expenditures, creating a tower of budgetary babel and resulting in waste of all sorts. This waste means further pressure on already strapped state spending.

If O'Connor's model is correct, then even the seemingly massive cutbacks and retrenchments we gossip about will not be enough in the long-run. If corporate demands for a just profit and its resistance to taxation continues to be combined with its needs for state supplied infrastructure, then the fiscal crisis of the state is inherently unsolvable. And if that is true, then a critical teacher may well find it necessary to speak and act in favor of the replacement of current linkages between state and corporate sector with linkages serving broader, community interests. To put critical flesh on these analytical bones, we consider the present state support for academic based science and suggest some of the possibilities for critical teaching and practise implied by the uneveness of this support.

SOME QUESTIONS ON THE ROAD TOWARDS CRITICAL TEACHING

We noted above that turn-of-the-century academic leaders in social, physical and natural sciences chose to serve the emerging corporate sector, thereby blunting the possibilities of popularly focussed sciences. This choice to serve power was in exchange for the resources to institutionalize disciplines in American higher education. But must we who have inherited this bargain continue to honor the terms of trade? Must Prometheus be forever bound in the service of resource providing political-economic elites and the social arrangements they accept, be they capitalistic, fascistic, social democratic or communistic? Or can academic knowledge

production be re-oriented in this place and at this time from "science-for-profit" to "science-for-the-people" via the systematic application of critical teaching and research in the teeth of our economic troubles? Dare we begin to confront our own complicity in O'Connor's fiscal crisis of the state'?

As the barest first step towards raising these questions to the level of sustained discourse, we turn to three related questions in whose answers we will find some possibilities for saving our scholarly souls via critical thought and deed. First, we will ask how state expenditures are used to support academic social, physical and natural sciences. Here we will see that state support approaches $40 billion a year, mostly in infrastructure costs with the federal contribution being especially significant in substantive research and development scientific activities.

Second, we will wonder how the current fiscal crisis of the state effects these governmental expenditures. Here we will find the competition among the 50-states for corporate investment as the underlying dynamic driving state support levels for academic science. We will show states that win higher levels of corporate investment seem to do so by offering their citizens as particularly profitable labor power. And we will notice that states successfully offering such labor power also invest heavily in the infrastructure of academic science funding post-secondary education at above average levels. Then, we will ask if these 50-state competitive efforts wastefully exacerbate the federal funding effort?

Third, we will take advantage of the uneveness of state support to cross-classify the 50-states by the level of governmental science funding and suggest some of the more obvious possibilities for critical teaching

and research available in four situations. Taken together, our answers locate the academy within the dynamics of its resource availability at a time of world wide economic crisis, at a surprisingly promising conjuncture of public issues and private problems.

STATE EXPENDITURES FOR ACADEMIC SCIENCE

In the United States, government support for academic science occurs in three ways. First, the 50 states supply basic infrastructure costs at both public and private schools. For example, they fund about 40% of public post-secondary education. In 1980-81, this amounted to some $20 billion spent largely on physical plant, staff, libraries, laboratories and operating expenses.[8] Further, many states increasingly provide scholarship and other monies to private institutions. Fifty-state dollars, then, are fundamental for building the base on which advanced science rests.

Second, the federal government contributes to academic science at both public and private schools augmenting the 50-state infrastructure funds with some $7.3 billions in student aid in 1977. Further monies are given to post-secondary institutions for non-science activities, amounting to $3.5 billion in 1978. Washington also funds the substance of academic science directly, granting $4 billion (in 1978) to universities and colleges for research and development activities. Third, federal and state tax policies allow individual and corporate write-offs to bolster both academic infrastructure and R & D activity. In 1977, the Federal Treasury received $3.8 billion less as a result of such schemes.[9] In sum, total government funding for U.S. academic science approached $40 billion a year in the late 1970s.

THE DYNAMICS OF STATE SCIENCE SUPPORT ARE ROOTED IN THE 50 STATES

How does the current fiscal crisis of the state effect these levels of government support? The 50-states are now competing with one another by offering themselves as preferential sites for capitalist investment. As part of this sales effort, they stress their citizen's low level of unionization and a favorable business climate, as indexed by anti-union "right to work" laws. Where such sales efforts are successful, capital investment occurs and "new jobs" are created.[10] And where new jobs are created, there the 50-states expand their investment in post-secondary education. Table 1 shows the 41 (of 48 or 85%) states where levels of unionization were inversely related to job growth in the 1970s. And it also shows that 33 of these 41 states (80%) budgeted post-secondary education accordingly: expanding higher education where job gains were linked to low unionization and contracting it where the inverse relationship obtained. In short, where the states are successful in selling their citizens as profitable labor, there the infrastructure of academic science is likely to flourish.

For its part, the federal government's dynamics of distributing academic science's share of R & D funds mirror less faithfully the competition among states for job creation. On the one hand, in a federal system, these inter-state competitive pressures are easily articulated through Congressional tinkering with agency budgets and science bureaucrats. Yet, on the other hand, two other factors further shape academic science's federal level of support. First, the responsiveness of the federal executive to all corporations claiming "the national interest" make presidential science policy subject to the net balance of

profitability strategies current in big business circles. Thus, in the Oval Office, the capital intensive profit schemes of the defense and information industries are weighed against the labor intensive profit projections of textile and furniture manufactures.[11] Second, the entrenched prestige system of academic science channels federal R & D funds to well established performers.[12]

As a result, the distribution of federal funds is slightly less sensitive to the job competition among states than is the pattern of 50-state post-secondary funding. Accordingly, among the 41 states showing the inverse relationship between unionization and job creation, 26 (63%) also show appropriate federal R & D funding: above average grants for states "winning" the competition for corporate investment, and below average grants for the "losers." (See Table 1). Within these 26 states, the 15 winners averaged federal R & D funding increases of 186% between 1970 and 1979. For the 11 losers, it was only 72%.

In all, then, the present situation seems to be this. Academic infrastructure grows fullest where capital finds labor to be more easily exploited. And substantive science is funded increasingly at such places.

UNEVEN STATE SUPPORT AND SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR CRITICAL TEACHING

What are the implications of this distribution of governmental resources for academics concerned with furthering a critical science, one "for the people" and not "for profit"? The key insight is the striking uneveness of scientific funding and hence development. And while this uneveness is to be expected in a political economy without popular planning capacity, its expression in governmental science funding provides some perhaps unexpected possibilities for critical innovation in a time of world-wide economic crisis. For all is not gloom and doom, even in world-wide bust.

Indeed, in some states, booms are underway. Consider, for example, those states where funding is increasing for both scientific infrastructure and substance. In these 14 states, (as shown in top left of Table 2) monies are likely to be available for educational innovation in the infrastructural colleges and universities. Here courses on the social uses and determinants of scientific ends come to mind. Science for what? for who? for profit or for use? and how? are the key curricular questions that might be explored. And substantive science funds might be secured to document working conditions, a topic likely to be worth exploring since 11 of the 14 are low unionization, high job growth states. Perhaps in these states, critical social science instruction could be combined with similarly critical substantive science focussed on issues in the wider society. In the few states where unions are strong, occupational health and safety studies might offer an arena for such combined efforts. And, even where unions are weak, efforts might be made to link up disciplines with universities--and across universities--to provide technical, social and political support for popular movements such as disarmament.

And what of those states where the funds for both academic science infrastructure and substance are decreasing? Most of these 14 states (see the lower right of Table 2) are losers in the inter-state competition for capital investment. Here the trick is to combine self-interested academic defense against retrenchment and scholarly speed-up with some effort to shape science education and substantive work in a popular direction. Since post-secondary academic unions are located in 10 of these states, these organizations emerge as natural forums for determining how the professoriate's self-interest might be found in fostering a science for the

people. For example, the millions of unionists in hazardous employment might be offered critical courses by academic scientists seeking new student populations.[13] And again, links among academics across discipline, college and state boundaries could facilitate technical, social and political support for emerging popular movements.

A third funding pattern involves post-secondary growth coupled with below average federal R & D increases. Of the dozen states here (see the top right of Table 2), nine are winners in the competition for capital investment and jobs. Since academic infrastructure is well-funded here, the most obvious opportunities are instructional: critical courses both on and off campus, one supposes. Further, as links are made within and outside one's specialty, the possibilities for developing federal R & D funds increase, particularly since these states are arguably 'under represented' in such funding.

Finally, there are eight states (in the lower left part of Table 2) where below average post-secondary growth obtains along side above-average federal R & D grants. Here the task probably is similar to states in more dramatic "bust": to combine the broadest, most popular definition of post-secondary rationalization with federally funded popular science projects. Interestingly in 5 of these 8 states academic unions exist, once more providing a natural forum where such combination might be explored. And once such exploration was completed, critical teachers would test their ideas in the forums of the wider community: in talks with service clubs and unions, women's clubs and church groups, and wherever else community sentiment might be tested and organized.

REPRISE

In sum, then, the world-wide economic crisis expresses itself in both an interstate competition for labor intensive capitalist investment as well as national and international struggles among capital intensive industries. In these unplanned patterns of uneven economic development, academic science wins and loses infrastructure and substantive funding. Nonetheless, academic natural, physical and social scientists may well find in these funding rhythms enough promise to mount and sustain the sort of critical teaching that will begin to yield a science in the service of people not profit. The task before the critical teacher, then, is a deeply political one for it amounts to untying the exchanges negotiated and affirmed by our academic forerunners. Yet, its appeal is the possibility of becoming subjects : active and critical participants in our own work lives and in the progressive transformation of our societies. The alternative is to continue our inherited roles as objects directed by educational managers, themselves haunted by impersonal forces, by spectres beyond their full comprehension.

NOTES

1. This is a revised version of papers presented at the tenth World Congress of the International Sociological Association, Mexico City, August, 1982 and the 77th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, September 1982.

2. In addition to The Chronicle of Higher Education, one thinks of the several series published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco and the various reports of the Carnegie foundations. See, for example, Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, Three Thousand Futures: The Next Twenty Years for Higher Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980).

3. David W. Nobel, America By Design: Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism, (New York: Knopf, 1977).

4. Edward T. Silva and Sheila A. Slaughter, "Prometheus Bound: The Ideological Limits of Social Science Professionalization in the Progressive Period," Theory and Society, Vol. 9, No. 6 (November 1980), 781-819, and Not With Students But With Statesmen: Social Science and the Transformation of American Higher Education, 1865-1921 (forthcoming).

5. Karl Marx, "Letter to Ruge" in The Marx-Engels Reader, edited by Robt. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 13.

6. Douglas Keller, "Critical Theory, Democracy and Human Rights,"New Political Science, 1,1 (Spring, 1979), pp. 12-18.

7. James O'Connor, The Fiscal Crisis of the State (New York: St. Martin's, 1973). See also the journal Kapitalistate for continuing commentary on this model.

8. Millet, John D., "State Governments," in Philip G. Altbach and Robert O. Berdahl, Higher Education in American Society, (Buffalo, N.Y., Prometheus, 1981 pp. 133-156, quote at p. 135.

9. Statistical Abstract of the U.S. (101st edn.) (Washington, 1980), Table 1068, p. 626 and table 1063, p. 624; Chester E. Finn, Jr., Scholars, Dollars and Bureaucrats, (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1978), p.p. 4-19.

10. Robert Goodman, The Last Entrepreneurs, America's Regional Wars For Jobs and Dollars (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

11. John C. Raines, Lenora E. Berson and David McI. Gracie, eds., Community and Capital in Conflict: Plant Closings and Job Loss (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982).

12. Judith K. Lawrence and Kenneth C. Green, A Question of Quality: the Higher Education Ratings Game (Washington: American Association for Higher Education, 1980).

13. For an example of industrial unionists interested in such a science, see Jim Brophy and John Jackson, "Fighting for Health and Safety: Windsor, Ontario," Radical America, 15, 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1981), pp. 27-40.

TABLE 1

STATES (N-48)[1]	UNIONIZATION[2] Low=20% or less in early 1970's High=more than 20%	JOB GROWTH[2] Low=less than 24%, 1970-78 High=more than 24%	POST-SECONDARY GROWTH[3] Low=below 33% growth, the State average High=above average	FEDERAL R AND D FUNDS[4] Low=below 116.5% the average State growth, 1970-79 High=above average
1. Ala., Ariz., Fla., Geo., Neb., N.M., N.D., S.C., Tex., Utah, Va., (N=11)	Low	High	High	High
2. Ark., Kan., Okla., La., Miss., N.H., N.C., Tenn., Wyo. (N=9)	Low	High	High	Low
3. Id., Ia., Me., Vt. (N=4)	Low	High	Low	High
4. Colo., S.D., (N=2)	Low	High	Low	Low
5. Conn., Ill., Ind., Mass., Mich., Mo., N.Y., Ohio, Pa., W. Va. (N=10)	High	Low	Low	Low
6. Md., R.I., Wis. (N=3)	High	Low	Low	High
7. N.J. (N=1)	High	Low	High	Low
8. Del. (N=1)	High	Low	High	High
9. Minn., Cal. (N=2)	High	High	High	High
10. Ky., Nev. (N=2)	High	High	High	Low
11. Wash. (N=1)	High	High	Low	High
12. Ore., Mont. (N=2)	High	High	Low	Low

1. Alaska and Hawaii are omitted.
2. Robt. Goodman, The Last Entrepreneurs: American's Regional Wars for Jobs and Dollars, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1979, pp. 42-43.
3. Chronicle of Higher Education, 23:8 (21 Oct. 1981), p. 13. Data controlled for inflation.
4. Academic Science: R and D funds, Fiscal year, 1979 NSF 81-301, Washington: USGPO, 1981, table B-9, p. 13. Data excludes "Research and Development" Centers.

TABLE 2

POST-SECONDARY GROWTH	FEDERAL R AND D FUNDING: ABOVE AVERAGE	FEDERAL R AND D FUNDING: BELOW AVERAGE
ABOVE AVERAGE	Ala., Ariz., (Fla.), Geo., (Neb.), N.M., N.D., Tex., S.C., Utah, Va., (Del.), (Minn.), (Cal.)	Ark., (Kan.), Okla., La., Miss., (N.H.), Tenn., Wyo., (N.J.), Ky., Nev., N.C.
	N=14	N=12
BELOW AVERAGE	(Ia.), Idaho., (Me.), (Vt.), (Md.), (R.I.), Wis., Wash.	(Conn.), (Ill.), Ind., (Mass.), (Mich.), Mo., (N.Y.), (Ohio), (Pa.), W. Va., Colo., (S.D.), (Ore.), (Mont.)
	N=8	N=14

(STATE) = State has some public post-secondary academic unions as reported in Joseph W. Garbarino, "Faculty Unionism: the First Few Years," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 448 (March 1980) pp. 74-85.